Boston Sept. 23. 1862.

Dear friend, This morning I can write you on but one topic, for I can think & speak of no other. This morning's journals bring us President Lincoln's Proclamation, dated at Washington yesterday, (22d) and now published all over the Country, wherein he declares that on the 1st day of January next all Slaves in States, or parts of States, which shall then be in Rebellion against the Government shall be "thenceforward and forever free"! Laus Deo!

I will not stop to criticise here, & say this freedom ought (as indeed it ought) to have been made immediate, - that it ought to have been proclaimed (as it ought) seventeen months ago, and every day since that time - that even now a leniency towards rebels, and a nothingness to presence Slavery, are manifested which indicate both the weakness and the slowness which have been such marked characteristics of Mr. Lincoln's Administration of affairs, - I cannot stop to dwell on these. Joy, gratitude, thanksgiving, renewed hope and courage, fill my soul. I rejoice in this justice though so tardy, though yet held at arms' length from us and more. At length the President recognises, solemnly, the real Cause of our troubles and sufferings, the Mother of the Mighty Iniquity of the Rebellion, and pronounces its doom. At length he hears the voice of the People, as uttered in the Emancipation Laws of the late Congress, and as echoed in multitudes of ways & forms since, and gathers into all into one mighty utterance for the confusion of the Rebellion and for the Overthrow of Slavery. For, such is the madness, such the blind and senseless folly of the Rebel States, that I do not at all believe that any of them will take warning & return to their allegiance, that their Slavery may be saved. I trust and believe it is entirely too late for that, or for Slavery to be saved if they do. From [illegible] hour, certainly, it is no longer a doubtful question - it is dying - the mortal arrow has pierced it through

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— As I just read over again the first part of my l[etter] written evening before last, it comes very vividly to me that I was writing just on the eve of this late act[ion] of the President. It was the dark time which precedes the dawn, and I do look upon this Proclamation as the Dawn of a glorious day of Freedom. Already I find the friends of Freedom & of a true Republic are greatly strengthened & encouraged by this act of the President. On the other hand, whispers of evil purposes reach me, on the part of those who have Sworn that Slavery shall live, let what will come of the Country, the Government, the Union, and Liberty. I cannot tell what these men may proceed to do. We know what they would wish to do, and I have no doubt they will leave not an effort untried to accomplish it. If they can persuade or cajole Gen[era]l McClellan that the Integrity of the Union and the Nation's Salvation depend on his marching to Washington and taking the Reins of Government into his own hands they will do it. It is too lamentable a fact that, as has happened before to Nations with a powerful army on foot, so now we are in danger of a Military Despotism. But, with the intelligence and honesty so extensively to be found in our Soldiers, and with the ripe sentiments & convictions of the great bulk of our Northern people I cannot think for an instant that the accursed plots of the Northern traitors will succeed. We shall soon know something of what they are thinking and doing. Our worst enemies are those of our own household". — I mean men living on Northern soil & boasting great friendship for Mr. Lincoln & the Union; and the principal mischief of Mr. Lincoln's ~~late~~ dilatory & doubtful policy has been the time and the encouragement it has given to these snakes to organize themselves, to learn their strength and gain security. They have fully used their time & opportunity and the number is not inconsiderable, I suspect, of those who are ready to resist the Government rather than see Slavery overthrown. Watch the Newyork Herald, the Newyork Express, the Newyork Journal of Commerce, the Boston Post, the Boston Courier, the Chicago Times, the Cincinnati Enquirer and you will be likely to see some extraordinary developments soon, — if they dare.

Meantime the Proclamation may, I hope & believe, check-mate the powerful party in England and France who desire nothing so much as the disruption of this Union, and the Success of the Slaveholders' Rebellion. The London Clubs may howl now, to their utmost, as they doubtless will. Ah! for the anti-slavery of England! — Farewell for now, dear Webb. — We all send you our love